

# Travel as a Metaphor: D H Lawrence and Lawrence Durrell

Dr. Lata Marina Varghese

(Associate Professor, PG Dept of English, Catholicate College, Pathanamthitta, KERALA)

## Abstract

The journey is universally recognized as a narrative in many cultures. Since the earliest times, the act of travelling, of proceeding from one place to another, has been seen as a natural metaphor-- for learning, for the acquisition of knowledge and experience. Indeed the metaphor of travel pervades Western literature. But all metaphors of travel are not alike in their implications, although 'journey archetype' lies at the heart of many well known works. As a voyage of self discovery, of exploring new landscapes or as an escape from a stress filled situation, the travel thus inscribed is not only a geographic and cultural process but also a metaphor for the enabling movement of thought itself. Travel as a metaphor involves a voyage of the self, a search for identity through a series of cultural identifications. Travel literature allows the reader experience a particular culture, place, or people through the eyes of the writer. D.H. Lawrence and Lawrence Durrell are widely recognised as one of the finest *travel writers*. Both had a passion for the Mediterranean islands which each had visited in course of time. Although Lawrence has long been recognised and celebrated as a travel writer where his characters "discover their identities through their response to place", the serious purpose of his travels has not hitherto been thoroughly studied and evaluated. Lawrence Durrell, on the other hand, lived almost all of his adult life in the Mediterranean, and nearly all of his important writing-including the Alexandria quartet, the Avignon quintet, the poems, and his four travel books-focuses on the region. Durrell's fundamental philosophy about travel is codified as "human beings are expressions of their landscape,..". His passionate, evocative writing about his travels-in particular the Greek islands-is a timeless exploration of how 'landscapes shape our experience'. (1976). While Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* describes a brief journey, from Taormina in Sicily to the interior of Sardinia in January 1921, as an 'escape attempt' or as a potential antidote to modernity, Durrell's *Sicilian Carousel* (1976), forcefully represents the idea of travel as an escape and as a search for an existential identity. The paper focuses attention on Lawrence's book *Sea and Sardinia* and Durrell's *Sicilian Carousel*, where travel is seen as a metaphor for both discovering one's identity and also in discovering the spirit of the place/ landscape.

**Keywords:** Travel literature, metaphor, DH Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia*, Lawrence Durrell's *Sicilian Carousel*

## Introduction

From earliest times, people have set out on journeys. Some of these journeys now form the core of our folklore, history and myth. In fact, "travelling is one of the oldest and largest clusters of

metaphors in any language” (Adams 14). Travel as a metaphor involves a voyage of the self, a search for identity through a series of cultural identifications. The act of travelling, of movement from one place to another, has been seen as a natural metaphor for learning, for the acquisition of experience and knowledge, of discovering new landscapes and cultures or as an escape from a stress filled situation, and the travel thus inscribed is not only a geographic and cultural process but also a metaphor for the enabling movement of thought itself. All cultures are “travelling cultures” (Clifford, 1997: 17-46) and cultural identity is “the result of negotiation and intercultural transfer, for the powerful as well as the powerless, for ‘natives as well as strangers” (Koshar, 7). As Bakhtin opines for the traveller the journey is "the process of becoming" and "awareness of idea of oneself through experience of the other" (115).

From the beginning of written cultures travel is closely related to literature, starting from the epic of Gilgamesh, the Bible and the European history of novel. In Literature, the notion of travel is closely related with the notion of telling / writing: “It is often said that travellers have stories to tell. Critics repeatedly point out how – from Herodotus to Odysseus to Marco Polo – travelers have returned home and started talking: spinning elaborate tales about their adventures, speaking of monsters, beauties, treasures, and harrowing escapes from danger. (Zilcosky 3). The Greek Epics contain different types of journey—the quest, the odyssey, and the adventure, all of which have served as powerful master plots in literary narratives. The different stages of travel--departure, voyage, encounters on the road, and return--provide any story with a temporal structure and at the same time help the readers to understand the personal life and mental development of the traveller. The Bible developed a metaphor of travel as pilgrimage, and human life as a journey towards divine. The centrality of the pilgrimage to Christianity produces much medieval travel writing. The great discoveries of the era of Humanism and Renaissance intensified a need for travelling and extended the interest for the newly discovered, exotic destinations. Undoubtedly the metaphor of travel pervades Western literature. The ‘journey metaphor’ lies at the heart of Homer’s *Odysseys*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*, Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* and Modern journeys, such as James Joyce’s *Ulysess* or T. S. Eliot’s *Waste Land* to name a few. In Britain in the Interwar period travel was seen as an escape. In fact, as Fussell writes, the British interwar generation felt that there was nowhere to go in Britain, and writers, in search of their own identity and solitude were leaving for other places, which in the end resulted

in creation of intellectual diaspora. In modern times, immigrants, exiles, refugees, soldiers, students, scholars, artists, business travellers, and tourists have become the key actors in a global story of unremitting movement. No wonder travel-writing has become one of the most popular postmodern genres. Travel writing involves border crossings both literal and figurative: crossings between different countries, identities, cultures, memory and reality, traditions, arts, fiction and non-fiction, genres. The postmodern idea of travel draws from Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) to expand the theme of travel to the notion of gaze as the narrative, political and cultural appropriation of the world of a different, often exotic, culture or of a traveller who goes to see the world for different reasons, but makes conclusions and analysis about it from his own point of view. However all metaphors of travel are not alike in their implications.

According to Clark (1998, 2000) travel as a metaphor can be illuminating because travel puts people into situations where they must act in 'conjunction and connection' with unfamiliar others. Outside the boundaries of their home territories, people may experience an anonymity that undermines their habitual assumptions and attitudes. Those situations offer them opportunities to become less "self-enclosed" as they look for the "proper part" they might play there. But such travel metaphors limits rhetorical identity to two opposing choices: one that is self-enclosed, autonomous, and territorial, or one that embraces every transformation of self that follows from encounters with others who share the road. Rather than enabling groups and individuals to adjust to one another, each of these identities tends to negate the other. Safe within their home boundaries, individuals have little incentive to learn ways of behaving in conjunction and connection with those who are not at home there. Territorial identities work both to keep people from crossing those boundaries to encounter others whose identities are different and to keep them vigilant against those others who might cross inside and change their sense of "home." Travel can expand people's experience of what Dale Sullivan terms "the common dwelling place" that "enfolds" them in collectivity with others (127). As we travel, we encounter images that prompt us "to identify ourselves and our desires with the landscape, by asking ourselves how any man would fare who had to live in it." As travelers we experience in each new place "a concrete, three-dimensional, shared reality" within which we must, at least imaginatively, identify ourselves (343). In Burkean terms, what travelers encounter are alternative "scenes" for both identity and action, and those scenes are the "grounds for identification" (see Sheard 299).

Travel literature allows the reader experience a particular culture, place, or people through the eyes of the writer. D.H. Lawrence and Lawrence Durrell are widely recognised as one of the finest *travel writers*. Both had a passion for the Mediterranean islands which each had visited in course of time. Although Lawrence has long been recognised and celebrated as a travel writer where his characters “discover their identities through their response to place”, the serious purpose of his travels has not hitherto been thoroughly studied and evaluated. After the First World War, Lawrence was disillusioned with English and finally European civilization. In 1922 he set out on a course of travel that took him round the world. Lawrence Durrell, on the other hand, lived almost all of his adult life in the Mediterranean, and nearly all of his important writing-including the Alexandria quartet, the Avignon quintet, the poems, and his four travel books-focuses on the region. Durrell's fundamental philosophy about travel is codified as "human beings are expressions of their landscape,..". His passionate, evocative writing about his travels-in particular the Greek islands-is a timeless exploration of how ‘landscapes shape our experience’. (1976). While Lawrence’s *Sea and Sardinia* describes a brief journey, from Taormina in Sicily to the interior of Sardinia in January 1921, as an ‘escape attempt’ or as a potential antidote to modernity, although it is a short tour of a few weeks only, Durrell’s *Sicilian Carousel* (1976) which is the fourth and final 'landscape book' that he wrote about his travels in and around the Mediterranean, forcefully represents the idea of travel as an escape and as a search for an existential identity. The paper, therefore, focuses attention on Lawrence’s book *Sea and Sardinia* and Durrell’s *Sicilian Carousel*, where travel is seen as a metaphor for discovering both one’s identity and also in discovering the spirit of the place/landscape.

A multifaceted personality, the corpus of D H Lawrence’s work reveals him to have been a multifarious writer -- a voluminous essayist, a playwright, a reviewer, a translator, a social critic, an avid letter-writer, and an accomplished travel writer. Lawrence’s travels, which circumnavigated the globe, took place almost non- stop between 1919 and his death in 1930. His desire for travel is described in the very first sentence SS where he declares. "Comes over one an absolute necessity to move" (SS 1). He wrote four travel books, which span the period from his pre-war *Travel in Italy* (September 1912-June 1914) to a week with Earl Brewster in April of 1927 touring Etruscan sites: *Twilight in Italy* (1916), *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), *Mornings in Mexico* (1927), and *Etruscan Places*(1932). Lawrence describes the travel experience as a process exhibiting an interplay between yearning and disappointment. What becomes apparent

about the traveller-narrator is a desire to escape from western perceptions of time and history. But the narrator realizes that we cannot escape "who we are," the "crucifixion" of consciousness (SS 90). His search for ideal places becomes an attempt to experience another "way" of being in the world. Thus, the freedom celebrated in the travel books presupposes the ability to cross the boundaries of our own traditions and conventions and enter another world on the basis of a common humanity. Through the travel narrative, the narrator invites the reader to experience alternative modes of being for himself, often urging him to visit the place for himself, to be a witness to it. *Sea and Sardinia* (1921) is about the desire to discard the burden of the past. Its narrator wishes to escape the deadening effects of the post-war world by making contact with a place that lies outside the historical process. His goal is to re-discover a pristine land and by that exploration and discovery to renew the self. "Lawrence's stress upon Sardinia's lack of history and culture tells us about his own needs not about the island". Lawrence evidently wanted to "escape his own past" (44). But his quest becomes a disillusioning experience. Nevertheless, this "disillusionment" allows the narrator to gain a new perspective on his relation to Italy and the past. The war and the post-war period having completely disconnected the present from the pre-war world, Lawrence eventually realizes that our relation to the past is analogous to that of Osiris. Yet, at the same time it holds potentially revelatory experience, clues to self-understanding and identity.

Lawrence's post-war experience was one of great disappointment. When he went to Sardinia in early January 1921, he wanted to escape the historical process that had led Europe through the war to this deadened and mechanized condition. If the war had not proven to be the "preamble" to an ideal world, he must now seek a culture and a landscape that escaped the European fate. The world of SS (especially the embarkation and return to Sicily) is a claustrophobic one. The traveler spends most of his time deriding the features of the modern world: he never walks but takes trains, ships, and buses; he encounters self-important officials; he discusses the economy; the army is present and everywhere there are scenes of potential tension. One such scene, for example, takes place near the end of his voyage: on the train to Naples, he comes across the defeated soldiers. In contrast the Sardinians in peasant costume seem to offer an alternative identity to that offered by post-war Europe. The narrator thus tries to capture that identity through vivid descriptions of the color and movement of their costumes.

Like several other British artists, D.H. Lawrence had always been fascinated by the Mediterranean Myth and, by Italy and Sicily in particular. Thus, D.H. Lawrence's visits to Italy were not only rooted in the wish of perpetuating the eighteenth century "Grand tour", or the Byron-Shelley Italian experience but also in his desire of penetrating – as he says – into Italy whose life is, just to quote his words from *Sea and Sardinia*:

so primitive, so pagan [...] Whenever one is in Italy, either one is conscious of the present, or of the Medieval influences, or of the far, mysterious gods of the early Mediterranean [...]”[4].

D.H. Lawrence's literary production, strongly imbued with autobiographical nuances, is deeply connected to his experience of self-discovery, both a spiritual and a metaphysical quest. D.H. Lawrence himself declares in *Sea and Sardinia*, that his discovery of Italy was also a discovery of himself, a "self-discovery"(5). If Lawrence is rejecting anything in *SS* it is the entire post-war world, and the traditions and conventions that led to it. *SS* returns to the place of origin. A familiar world is left behind, followed by an alien world (Sardinia) and a return to the familiar world of Sicily. This can also be seen as a movement away from the modern world, to a primitive world, and a subsequent integration with the modern world.

In the first chapter, the narrator decides to travel to Sardinia because it "has no history, no date, no race." After a night spent in Palermo, the second day of their journey and second chapter of *SS* begin to move away from crowded and official-ridden Sicily. On board the Sardinia-bound ship, the narrator manifests a joy and a sense of freedom inspired by the movement of the ship. Despite the "bluebottle" crew, the "mosquito" carpenter, and the bad food, the narrator feels rejuvenated by the ship's motion. He approaches Cagliari with due reverence, recognizing in it the "historyless" place he is searching for. There are three things that soothe, divert and fascinate him, and prepare him for the debarkation at Cagliari: the ship, the sea, and the sight of Mount Eryx. In all the three cases, there is the suggestion of yearning - - a nostalgia for an alternate world and a certain delight in its discovery and recognition. Once in open sea, there is a change of mood and tone, The narrator experiences a sense of liberation from the frustrations of the post-war world: "One is free at last" of all the hemmed-in life -- the horror of human tension, the absolute insanity of machine persistence .., the long drawn-out agony of a life

among tense, resistant people on land, and then to feel the long, slow lift. . . , I wished in my soul the voyage might last forever, that the sea had no end,..."(26-27).

The sea voyage becomes a metaphor for the narrator's desire to escape the spatial and temporal limitations associated with the land, symbol of the imprisoning effects of the post-war world. On deck the next day, the narrator catches sight of Cagliari from a substantial distance, it fulfills his expectations. There is an implicit admission of failure and irredeemable loss: Cagliari should be seen but not entered. On the whole, Cagliari is not a negative experience. It offers the first sight of peasant costumes (though the post-war atmosphere is here too). This Cagliari chapter initiates a series of visits to towns. It introduces the central section of SS (the sojourn in Sardinia). We note a lack of interest in personality and an emphasis on landscape and town names. This indicates a shift away from the symbolic import of character. In SS, Lawrence realizes that the link between people and place is preserved and manifested only by archaic cultures. The desolate landscape of Cagliari inspires his thought on the "spirit of place".

In the opening chapter of the essay *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), entitled 'The Spirit of Place' – first published in *English Review* in November 1918 –, Lawrence defines the spirit of place as the strong vital force able to maintain that otherness which differentiates a given place from any other. It should not be intended as something superficial, external, or natural that is as something simply defining the territory of a given place, but as the very soul of the place, which has influenced behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of the people inhabiting it. He writes:

Every continent has its own great spirit of place. Every people is polarized in some particular locality, which is home, the homeland. Different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence, different vibration, different chemical exhalation, different polarity with different stars: call it what you like. But the spirit of place is a great reality. (SCAL, 5-6)

A similar concept is expressed in *Sea and Sardinia*. The first element constituting the spirit of place is the natural landscape and Lawrence sees the landscape through the eyes of his memory which is arisen by the scents that he, and the reader with him, can smell. In addition, Lawrence's repeated references to flowers and fruits create a visual scene that the reader cannot but see painted in colours. Aetna is ever present in all Lawrence's passages about Sicily. *Sea and*

*Sardinia*, for instance, opens with a personification of the volcano, whose magic is strengthened by its position by the sea and its threatening activity, and with an explicit reference to its importance to the ancients:

[T]hen Etna, that wicked witch, resting her thick white snow under heaven,  
and slowly, slowly rolling her orange-coloured smoke. They called her the  
Pillar of Heaven, the Greeks. (SS,1)

What Lawrence called "Spirit of Place" is born of a momentary interaction between the writer's perspective powers, shaped by his experience, and external geography. The stimulus of unfamiliar landscapes can activate the deepest desires, dreams, and values (cf. Tracy 2-3). Mark Schorer affirms, "There is probably no other writer in literary history whose works responded so immediately to his geographical environment as Lawrence, and certainly there is no other modern writer to whose imagination 'place' made such a direct and intense appeal" (282). Lawrence proclaims: "We travel, perhaps, with a secret and absurd hope of setting foot on the Hesperides...". To Lawrence, the quest for the Hesperides gave way to the challenge of self-discovery. The traveler brings his perceptual habits and expectations with him, but his vision is renewed by new scenes.

*Sea and Sardinia* fully exploits Lawrence's volatile, hypersensitive temperament. "I suppose one carries one's own self wherever one goes," he writes. "But one undergoes a metamorphosis also" (Letters III: 353). The self, like scenes in memory or geological strata, is many-layered. Aware of his own changeable responses, Lawrence acknowledges that "Italy has given me back I know not what of myself, but a very, very great deal. She has found for me so much that was lost: like a restored Osiris." But, he adds, "apart from the great rediscovery backwards . . . there is a move forwards. There are unknown, unworked lands where the salt has not lost its savour" (SS 131). The trip to Sardinia is a voyage of total perception, its dynamics a process of interpenetration with the world. Scattered details coalesce to form an integrated picture, , while perception is supplemented by poetic or painterly imagination. Lawrence reads cultural history in landscapes: the Sicilian, as contrasted with the Sardinian, is "ancient, and classic-romantic, as if it had known far-off days and fiercer rivers" (14).



Lawrence went to Sardinia partly to see if he would like to live there. The search for Rananim, a harmonious community beyond the pale of civilization, involves "nostalgia" for a more primitive mode of living. While mysterious "coasts of illusion" inevitably lead to disillusionment,(4) the dream of a purer, more vital way of living never dies for Lawrence. In his quest for primitive landscapes, Lawrence compares Sardinia with Cornwall. The desolate hills and stone walls, with a few horses and a boy delivering milk, are "all Cornwall, or a part of Ireland, [so] that the old nostalgia for the Celtic regions began to spring up in me" (90). Such comparisons relate cultural geography to personal psychology. Bare landscapes are correlatives of savage freedom. In his response to such landscapes, Lawrence projects and receives back, altered or clarified, something of his deepest self. In *Sea and Sardinia*, Lawrence articulates a present response, rather than speculating on past cultures. Lawrence engages with culture as it manifests itself in landscape and people, costumes and crafts. But he is not a tourist whose experience stops at the eye: the prime motive for his travels is the stimulus to growth and self-discovery. As he comes in touch with the Spirit of Place, Lawrence's perceptions of color and space are revitalized and he touches the source of his creative being.

Turning to Lawrence Durrell, like many British writers of the 20th century, Durrell chose to live and work abroad. Lawrence Durrell lived almost all of his adult life in the Mediterranean, and nearly all of his important writing—including the Alexandria quartet, the Avignon quintet, the poems, and his four travel books—focuses on the region. Although Durrell spent much of his life beside the Mediterranean, he wrote relatively little about Italy; it was always somewhere that he was passing through on the way to somewhere else. *Sicilian Carousel* is his only piece of extended writing on the country and, naturally enough for the islo-maniac Durrell, it focuses on one of Italy's islands. In order to equip himself to write about Sicily, whose history is so long and varied, and its archaeological remains so rich and spectacular, Durrell joined a bus tour, the 'Sicilian Carousel' around the ancient sites of island. On the surface we have a characteristically amusing account of his travels with a mixed bag of companions, but the deeper theme is Mediterranean civilisation, its manifestation and its meaning. Durrell inspects Sicily—its history, people, temples, flowers.

*Sicilian Carousel* results in a contemplation of Durrell's ideas on insularity, and a return to places dear to his heart - particularly Cyprus. This tour is a kind of escape from an escape, but Durrell is never quite the tourist on the bus. He describes his experiences of the organised tour very well, spending some time introducing us to his fellow tourists. He admits to some satisfaction and pleasure in aspects of the tour, for example, he seems to rather enjoy the bus as a form of transport and is relieved not to have to drive himself. And yet, he is also not quite the tourist - he distances himself from the rest of the group. When the tour is finished, he drives himself around the island, becoming an independent traveller again. The idea of travel as escape is forcefully represented in Roberto, the guide's, bitter attitude to tourism and tourists: "Travelling isn't honest. Everyone is trying to get away from something or else they would stay at home. The old get panicky because they can't make love anymore, and they feel death in the air. The others, well, I bet you have your own reasons too".

*Sicilian Carousel* results in a contemplation of Durrell's ideas on insularity (isolation-exile), and a return to places dear to his heart - particularly Cyprus that stirs Durrell's restless spirit in his search of existential identity. Cyprus is the core of his attempts to rationalise concepts such as insularity, Mediterraneity and Hellenism. The writer's mind wavers between the idea of insularity as, from one hand, a spatial circumscription preserving one's identity and, on the other, as a possibility to escape via the surrounding sea, in search of new existential perspectives. Durrell comes to Sicily in July 1975, twenty years after having written the last volume of his Trilogy on the Mediterranean Islands, Corfu, Rhodes and Cyprus. He comes to close the cycle with the Italian island: «The biggest and the most beautiful», and to complete the image of an aesthetic myth, that nourished his work; to conclude a dream that guided his past. After the tour, commissioned by a travel agency, he wrote *Sicilian Carousel*, (his last book on the Mediterranean Islands), where he talks of the historical and mythical stratification of the great Italian island. Not only the landscapes, but also the memories, are set in a frame of mythical and historical associations. Acting as spiritual guide to Durrell is Martine, a friend from Cyprus, now dead, who wrote letters to him from Sicily. She, like the author, suffered from «island mania». Through such letters, Durrell establishes a voice from the past, reviving the cultural climate in which his meditations on 'Mediterraneity' matures.

Durrell returns to the Mediterranean that for him had established the realization of a Utopia of aesthetics and existentialism. From the first pages of the book, Durrell seems to emphasise not only ties of characters, but also geological ones between the Greek islands and Sicily, Cyprus in particular. <sup>9</sup>The trip around the Italian island offers a chance for the author to undertake a final comprehensive review of that world which he longed for to associate himself in his life and in his body of work. Not only the landscapes, but also memories, are set in a frame of mythical and historical associations. Since his sojourn in Corfu, Durrell had begun to build the image of an isolated island, Mediterranean, sun-washed, sea-stroked, which he defines as a place where «the blue really begins. But however it is used as the point of departure and return; it retains its isolating, healing function. It becomes a place, even when it is war-torn Cyprus, for the isolation of the cities in which the artist finds much of his material, a place in which the artist can compose his fragmented experience by linking it to the landscape soaked in the past, a landscape richer and older and more meaningful than this modern, chaotic one. For the Mediterranean world, where mythology walks in a wave.... and the islands are, has entered Durrell's work. It has given him more than a locale for his work; far more subtly - in imagery, in metaphors, in symbols - it has become an integral part of the soul, mind and memory of the poet, a living tissue of the work itself.

In *Sicilian Carousel*, the trip in Sicily, for Durrell, is not so much the exploration of something new but an attempt to re-discover a lost world - the Mediterranean ecstasy. It is with this recollective objective that Durrell goes to Sicily. Already, since the very first pages of the book, the author's awareness of the concept of island is evident as something circumscribed, associated with a certain brand of conservatism pertaining to the preservation of identity. And further in the book he describes Sicily as an idyllic place, isolated in space and time, that maintains its traditional identity. Sicily and the Mediterranean islands are common in the sense that they are idyllic places in which to enjoy a simple fulfilled life, a sense of being in the right place, with the right people: not pleasure that cloy, or ecstasy that exhausts, but simple happiness, the sun, the sea, sound dreamless sleep, trusted companionship, the taste of spring water. But in *Sicilian Carousel* there is also the consciousness that the concept of insularity does not consist only in the happiness given by the sun, the sails, the fishes, the faithful friends or by the spring waters. The island is limited by the sea that, from one side, reinforces the sense of

belonging, from the other side, implying enclosing)in itself the double notion of arrival and departure, can be the cause of deep and unforeseeable shifts. For this reason, the insularity is also inseparably associated with the concept of violation of boundaries - that is invasions, peaceful or violent. The idea of insularity meant, in its dualism between a paradise to protect from the «invasions» of the outside world and in which to live and as a place exposed to every violation from which to escape.

The Mediterranean is a spatial circumscription that shapes a specific character, a certain attitude, an identifiable temperament, a way of life, a particular vision of the world; in a word it is associated with a certain brand of conservatism, isolationism and preservation of identity where Durrell really fulfils himself - finds in them a resonance that exactly suited his talent and his personality. But the Mediterranean is also a place from which one can be seduced, even unconsciously, to escape, like a new Ulysses , to grow, to know, to be different, to be something else or someone else apart from that permanence in a familiar place, where one is recognized as belonging to it, not an outsider, but assured. This dichotomy between settling and escaping wracked, consciously or unconsciously, the writer's brain for his whole life. But in the context of the encounter of opposite worlds and civilizations, and in the context of Sicily and Cyprus, as islands invaded by foreign populations, Durrell observes that, in Sicily, the sea played also a positive role, bringing culture and welfare, fusing harmoniously the tensions derived from the clash between Eastern and Western worlds in contrast with what happened in Cyprus, where the sea was bearer of tragic tensions which last until the present.

Durrell's fundamental philosophy about travel is declared, and the tone for this entire anthology is set, by the first piece, "Landscape and Character," a 1960 essay originally published in the *New York Times Magazine*--his sentiment codified as "human beings are expressions of their landscape, but in order to touch the secret springs of a national essence you need a few moments of quiet with yourself." Durrell's passionate, evocative writing about his travels-in particular the Greek islands-is a timeless exploration of how landscapes shape our experience. All the entries concern the Mediterranean World and particularly its islands celebrate what Durrell liked to call "Spirit of Place."

What makes *Sicilian Carousel* interesting, and distinguishes it from the other books of his famous trilogy, is the character of existential consumptive that Durrell gives it. After the tourist carousel so long postponed and intimately refused, the true travel, the real return to the ideal island and to the Mediterranean, starts at the end of the book, at the end of the tour purely explorative. Immersing himself in a more hidden and secret Sicily, one of the least known places and of the little villages half desert, places which echoes with the idea of insularity in which he has always identified himself, he found out the essence of the Italian island which is more in tune with his intimate heart and in his existential aspirations. This results, in the heart of the writer, anointing Sicily as the ideal island looked for in his previous travels to the islands of the trilogy. Contemporarily, Durrell notes with bitterness the fact that, for him, a future on the Mediterranean islands does not exist and that the idyllic island exists for him only as a utopian dream. With this belief, before his final departure from the island, Durrell, in the following way, concludes his trip: "I burnt Martine's letters on a deserted beach near Messina...it was the end of a whole epoch..."( 215-216). Therefore, to conclude this ideal trip in the Mediterranean, in Greece, in the islands, in Cyprus, but also in Sicily, the denouement of the "Carousel" is symbolically represented by the cathartic rite of the burning of Martine's letters that represents the departure of the writer from his past and from the idea to settle in an ideal island of the Mediterranean. This ritual is a sort of liberation from his dream to live in a paradisiacal world full of colour, sounds, light, shadow and rhythm, as the world of black cherries, sail, dust, arbutus, fishes. It is a conscious awareness of the end of the dream he longed for more than 20 years.

*Sicilian Carousel* can be seen as a review of Durrell's ideas of insularity. more than a book related to a real voyage, a diary of a fictional escape, of a return, all lived in the memory and in the nostalgia of those islands, the landscape and characters of which remained indelibly engraved in the soul of the writer. At the very end of *Sicilian Carousel*, after the cathartic rite, the guide of the tour acts as a spokesman for Durrell's ideas about the motivations that induce people to travel: "Travelling isn't honest. Everyone is trying to get away from something or else they would stay at home ...The others, well, I bet you have your own reasons too" (216).

## Conclusion

Travel is the great metaphor for embarking on a journey of emotional, psychological, and spiritual growth. Ultimately, all travel is inner travel, a way of finding out more about ourselves. Each journey, Steinbeck believes, is like a person with an individuality of its own. Many trips continue in the mind long after movement in space and time has ceased. Each person brings home a different city, a different journey, a different truth. "Travel," Lawrence Durrell once wrote, "can be one of the most rewarding forms of introspection." Mark Shorer, once said of D.H. Lawrence that his characters "discover their identities through their response to place." Lawrence Durrell too claims that "I believe we are all children of our landscape." Indeed it seems that we are shaped by where we are. Place works on us just as do events and people, and we become — or have the capacity to become — a different person in a different setting. Certainly it is this paradoxical play of permanence and change embodied in the same landscape that seems to have inspired some of the finest Mediterranean travel writing.

## Bibliography

Lawrence Durrell, *Sicilian Carousel*, New York, Faber and Faber, 1977.

Friedman, Alan Warren. "Place and Durrell's Island Books." *Modern Fiction Studies* 13.3 (1967): 329-41.

Burgess, Anthony. *Flame into Being: The Life and Work of D. H. Lawrence*. London: Heinemann, 1985.

Durrell, Lawrence. "Landscape and Character." *Spirit of Place: Letters and Essays on Travel*. Ed. Alan G. Thomas. New York: Dutton, 1969. 156-63.

Ellis, David. "Reading Lawrence: The Case of Sea and Sardinia." *D. H. Lawrence Review* 10 (1977): 52-63.

Gendron, Charisse. "Sea and Sardinia: Voyage of the Post-Romantic Imagination." *D. H. Lawrence Review* 15 (1982): 219-3

Janik, Del Ivan. *The Curve of Return: D. H. Lawrence's Travel Books*. English Literary Studies Monograph Series No. 22. Victoria, B.C.: U of Victoria P, 1981.

Nehls, Edward. "D. H. Lawrence: The Spirit of Place." *The Achievement of D. H. Lawrence*. Ed. Frederick J. Hoffman and Harry T. Moore. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1953.

Sabin, Margery. "The Spectacle of Reality in Sea and Sardinia." *The Art of Travel*. Ed Philip Dodd. London: Cass, 1982. 85-104.

Schorer, Mark. "Lawrence and the Spirit of Place." *A D. H. Lawrence Miscellany*. Ed. Harry T. Moore. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1959. 280-94.

Tracy, Billy T., Jr. D. H. Lawrence and the Literature of Travel. *Studies in Modern Literature 18*. Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI, 1983.

Weiner, S. Ronald. "The Rhetoric of Travel: The Example of Sea and Sardinia." *D. H. Lawrence Review 2* (1969): 230-44.

Clark, Gregory. "Writing as Travel, or Rhetoric on the Road." *College Composition and Communication 49* (1998): 9-23.

Reynolds, Nedra. "Who's Going to Cross this Border? Travel Metaphors, Material Conditions, and Contested Places." *JAC 20* (2000): 541-64.

Durrell, Lawrence. "Landscape and Character." *Spirit of Place: Letters and Essays on Travel*. Ed. Alan G. Thomas. New York: Dutton, 1969. 156-63.

Ellis, David. "Reading Lawrence: The Case of Sea and Sardinia." *D. H. Lawrence Review 10* (1977): 52-63.

Gendron, Charisse. "Sea and Sardinia: Voyage of the Post-Romantic Imagination." *D. H. Lawrence Review 15* (1982): 219-34.

Jack F. Stewart "Metaphor and metonymy, color and space, in Lawrence's 'Sea and Sardinia.'" *Twentieth Century Literature*. FindArticles.com. 11 Jun, 2011. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0403/is\\_n2\\_v41/ai\\_17861984/](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0403/is_n2_v41/ai_17861984/)

Lawrence, D.H. 1981(1921), *Sea and Sardinia*, in A. BURGESS (ed.), *D.H.Lawrence and Italy*, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 123

Lawrence's hardscrabble, working-class upbringing made a strong impression on him, and he later wrote extensively about the experience of growing up in a poor mining town. "Whatever I forget," he later said, "I shall not forget the Hags, a tiny red brick farm on the edge of the wood, where I got my first incentive to write." As a child, Lawrence often struggled to fit in with other boys. In the summer of 1901, Lawrence took a job as a factory clerk for a Nottingham surgical appliances manufacturer called Haywoods. However, that autumn, his older brother William suddenly fell ill and died, and in his grief, Lawrence also came down with a bad case of pneumonia. D. H. Lawrence occupies an ambiguous position with respect to James Joyce, Marcel Proust, T. S. Eliot, and the other major figures of the modernist movement. While on one hand he shared their feelings of gloom about the degeneration of modern European life and looked to ancient mythologies for prototypes of the rebirth all saw as necessary, on the other he keenly distrusted the modernists' veneration of traditional culture and their classicist aesthetics. Comparison with James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) suggests, however, how loosely the term applies to Lawrence's novel. 240 quotes from Lawrence Durrell: 'Does not everything depend on our interpretation of the silence around us?', 'There are only three things to be done with a woman. You can love her, suffer for her, or turn her into literature.', and 'I don't believe one reads to escape reality. A person reads to confirm a reality he knows is there, but which he has not experienced.' Most travelers hurry too much...the great thing is to try and travel with the eyes of the spirit wide open, and not to much factual information. To tune in, without reverence, idly -- but with real inward attention. If you just get as still as a needle, you'll be there. Lawrence Durrell, *Spirit of Place: Mediterranean Writings* edited by A.G.Thomas. tags: 16, landscape, new-journalism, place, travel. 51 likes. Like.